CIRCULAR.

OTTAWA, May 14th, 1889.

To the Warden of the County of Middlesex

DEAR SIR,

In response to the circular which I had the honor to address to your municipality, in the month of November last, on the subject of municipal tax exemptions, you are doubtless aware that a large number of petitions were presented at the late session of the Provincial Legislature, asking for the abolition of all such. Of these, numerous and influential though they were, no notice was taken by the Government. They were simply ignored, and the session passed without any steps having been taken to remedy the evil complained of.

The Government evidently is indisposed to interfere; and it may be safely assumed, will not do so, until compelled by the force of public opinion. Experience has thus proved that it will be useless to approach it again, unless we can first agree amongst ourselves upon a definite plan or programme in which we are at one and which we are prepared to insist upon.

With this object in view, it has been suggested that a conference of representatives from the various municipalities should be held during the coming summer, at which the subject could be discussed, and if deemed advisable a Provincial Association might be formed for the purpose of arousing and stimulating public opinion in its behalf.

Besides the question of the abolition of exemptions, in whole or in part, there are other provisions of the assessment law which could be profitably discussed with a view to their amendment. In the municipal law also there is great room for improvement, more especially in that portion of it bearing upon local improvements. All who are familiar with the subject are aware, that at every session of the Legislature, numbers of Bills for proposed amendments to both these Acts are introduced. Some of them beneficial, but many of them the reverse, and bearing evident marks of hasty consideration and imperfect acquaintance with the subject. Others there are, by no means infrequent, in which special legislation affecting particular localities is asked for. In very many cases this special legislation could be advantageously made of general application. The close of each session invariably witnesses a wholesale "slaughter of the innocents" amongst these crude as well as special attempts at legislation.

Such a conference as above suggested could not fail, it is believed, in having a most beneficial effect. Representatives from the various municipalities would be brought together. They would be men who from their position and practical experience would be better qualified than any others to discuss questions relating to the subjects referred to. Opinions would be interchanged, ideas compared, and the conclusions arrived at, could be laid before and pressed upon the consideration of the Government. As in the case of the "Provincial Association of Public and High School Trustees," which is an illustration to the point, the result could not fail of being generally advantageous.

I would suggest that such a conference should be held in Toronto, towards the latter part of June or early in July; and if you are in favor of this, would be glad to hear from you at as early a date as possible, as to whether you, along with one or two other representatives from your municipality, would be willing to attend and take part in its deliberations. I should also be glad to receive any suggestions on the subject you might have to offer.

If sufficient encouragement is received in the responses to this circular, the requisite steps will at once be taken to arrange for the conference, of which you will receive due notice.

I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

JACOB ERRATT,

Mayor.

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